Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the subject application.

Listing of Claims:

What is claimed is:

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A microencapsulated material, comprising:

a core component, wherein said core component is at least one of oxygen sensitive or water sensitive; and

a shell component encapsulating said core component, wherein said shell component comprises a polymer material and a structuring agent having an average particle size from about 0.1 to about 1 μm dispersed into said polymer material at a level of about 1 to 50 % by weight of the shell component, wherein said polymer material comprises pendant ionic groups that form an ionic bridge with said dispersed structuring agent, wherein said structuring agent decreases oxygen and water permeability through said polymer material and wherein said structuring agent is uniformly dispersed in said polymer material, wherein said structuring agent is selected from the group consisting of clay, silicates and silicas, phospholipids, pillared-like materials, metal salts, nanoplatelets, and mixtures thereof.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said core component is selected from the group consisting of unsaturated fatty acids, betacarotene, lutein,

zeazanthin, iron salts, copper salts, selenium salts, flavonoids, coenzyme Q10, herbs, spices, flavorants, extracts, protein and peptide drugs, amino acids and amino acid residues, surfactants, enzymes, peroxides, fragrances, catalysts, vitamins, nutritional supplements, minerals, herbal products, food additives, and mixtures thereof.

10. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said polymer material is selected from the group consisting of gelatin, alginate, carrageenan, casein, proteins, polysaccharides, waxes, gums, synthetic polymer materials, celluloses, fats, waxes, rosins, polyphosphates, and mixtures thereof.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, said shell component further comprising at least one additive selected from the group consisting of antioxidants, amino acid residues, phospholipids, sugars, and cross-linking agents.

14. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, further comprising at least one additive selected from the group consisting of antioxidants, amino acid residues, phospholipids, and sugars, wherein said at least one additive further decreases oxygen or water permeability through said polymer material.

15. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said microencapsulated material is in a form of a powder.

16. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said microencapsulated material is in a form of a membrane wherein said core component is dispersed and encapsulated within a continuous matrix of said shell component.

17. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said structuring agent forms an interior shell around said core component, and said polymer material forms an exterior shell around said interior shell.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said polymer material forms an interior shell around said core component, and said structuring agent forms an exterior shell around said interior shell such that a gradient exists extending radially into said microcapsule from said structuring agent to a mixture of said structuring agent and polymer material to said polymer material.

20. (Original) The microencapsulated material of claim 7, wherein said microencapsulated material is formed by a method selected from atomization methods, coacervation methods, and extrusion methods.

21-49. (Cancelled)